TOWN & OUNTRY CHURCH

Purposes of This Paper

The purposes of this paper are:

A. To encourage cooperation mong rural churches.

B. To improve the administra- ion of the local church, this to in- lude organization of the church, nance, religious education, com- nunity relationships, and the train- ng of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development f a Christian philosophy of rural ife, this to embrace ethical issues in griculture, social reconstruction, nd government programs; and the ontent of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The paper is an important part of n enlarged "cooperative rural hurch program," that will encour- ge a national "rural church move- nent."

Contributors

William Stewart and George Crenshaw are ural pastors in North Fairfield, Ohio.

Richard E. Johnson has the unique title of rural coordinator" in Puerto Rico, see page 9.

Ted H. Townsend edits and publishes several eeklies from Hamilton, New York.

Janis Laupmanis, Methodist Church, Lacota, lichigan.

Frank Gulinello, Methodist Church, Stough- n, Mass.

This Issue
No. 35
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Extending the Vacation School

WILLIAM STEWART AND GEORGE CRENSHAW

• During recent years the number of cooperative projects we have carried on in the North Fairfield, Ohio, area has gradually increased. We are tempted to think of this southern portion of Huron County as ours because between us we pastor five of the eight churches in a block of four townships, the other three having non-resident men living some distance away as pastors. The area is split at least three ways by outside trading centers and school districts. No one within the parish seems to evidence interest in the territory as a unit except the pastors in North Fairfield. To us it seems a natural territory for church cooperation in schools for training teachers and pupils, for camping activities, for musical programs, for parallel Lenten programs, and for common use of specialists.

Cooperative Project

Each summer so far we have sought to extend and improve the work with the youngsters. Last spring the first call came from a crossroads community, outside but adjoining our territory, to give preaching services a trial in the brick church closed for a decade. We felt that preaching would not open a dead church but that another type of activity might. Would the half dozen adults interested open the building and clean it up for a week's vacation school? Well, yes, if we would run it. Are there any children close? Some.

Beginning the first week in June we scheduled the school. Our twelve disciples were children who appeared regularly that week. They ranged from four-year-old Douglas who would *not* play but would watch, to 6th. grade Janice who did remember a few Bible stories she had heard when she had been able to attend Sunday School in a former community. We stayed pretty close to Biblical information in which the nominally Protestants were shamed one day when two Catholic boys on a fishing jaunt stopped in and answered all the questions. Twelve youngsters from six homes were taught for a week things they had no chance to know. It was the first group we had ever taught without any help or support.

We Make Progress

The second week was spent in Ripley Township at the central grade school building. Ripley still tries to support two struggling churches, each drawing largely from its side of the township. Cooperation is rare, due to the struggling nature of both organizations and due to non-resident pastors. We took the initiative—the first step in several years either church had taken in the community. Could we use the school? No one seemed to object. Could we find mothers to drive cars? Yes. Was there some local help? More than we could profitable use! Forty youngsters enrolled by the end of school—a group not more than half of which attended either Sunday School.

Again the teaching material was basically Bible material, geography, maps and memorizing. We believe the experience of lives recorded in the Bible is valuable for the vision of God it can give. Since church territory lines overlap somewhat, a few pupils had been in other vacation schools previous years; but from at least two mothers came the comment that this week's work was more rewarding than the previous two week's sessions. Such comment made us wonder whether there is not such ignorance of basic religious material, in spite of our church schools, that intensive one week sessions like this are of more value than class periods spent in discussing the social problems and the nature of nature.

At Ripley we closed with a demonstration period designed to fix in the minds of the parents what we had been after and how we had gone about our school. The crowd equalled that for eighth grade graduation, which is something.

We Learn More

The third week we had to split up, each superintending a school in its second year. These schools at New Haven and Steuben, the southwest and northwest corners of our territory, we thought should be able to run the second year without both of us present. That meant better help than we had the year before and some preliminary scurrying around to find it. Each school enrolled about 40 youngsters. We learned that almost any community, at least of the Huron County variety, has ability not ordinarily used.

A school teacher, a housewife, a couple of older girls and the preacher can handle a school of this size very well. A part-time music teacher will help if music is not represented on the faculty already. The preachers found it necessary to plan worship services and classes ahead of time so that equipment and certain limited supplies could be passed around. One of these schools conducted the Children's Day program as its closing, which we felt was superior to the traditional recitation observance.

The North Fairfield School, the parent not only in sponsoring these other schools but in training the pastors for such work, reached a new level last summer. The top attendance day (109) and the total enrollment (118) broke attendance records of a dozen years. Our enrollment was more than 12 per cent of the population of the community, which we felt was close to the total possible for our township.

Friends Cooperate

For the first time outside help was present in the form of a team of American Friend's Service Committee Peace Caravan of girls. Thrusting the girls into the work without preparation was a bit unfair to them but, after adjustment at the first, one of their pageants presented at the end of two weeks was very good. The Negro girl was valuable to the experience of our youngsters as we have no Negro population.

Valuable Things

We enjoyed the weeks spent in conducting the schools. They are hard weeks, but if you like to teach as we do such work is rewarding. We found several valuable things had happened:

1. We were able to know the youngsters, the homes, and the communities we served better than ever. Without Vacation School we would know less than half the youngsters other than by sight in the one hundred square miles.

2. We discovered and put to work people we had been unable to reach in other ways. Some women, for instance, can give several mornings in a row but cannot be counted on for regular church school work. It gives us a chance to enlist and train teen-age girls who are often without regular employment during the summer months.

3. Running the school out of a common central treasury to which all contribute avoids a lot of duplication in equipment such as paste, paper, crayons, rulers, pictures, etc. Also, some permanent equipment can be purchased and used from year to year in each school (projector, slides, phonograph, records, texts, pictures, tools).

4. We find that common interest in songs and material enhances the fellowship in the various churches throughout the year, and gives common ground to the group in parish-wide gatherings.

5. Recreation and songs can lead to proper attitudes and need not be merely a method of entertaining the boys and girls.

6. A chance for churches in two of the communities to cooperate on a community basis, something neither had done on any other basis.

"A little child shall lead them. . . ."

Correspondence Church Schools Flourish

• Mrs. Kenneth Moore, Traer, Iowa, reports almost 3,000 families and individuals enrolled in correspondence church schools in northwestern states among the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in an article in *The Rural Messenger,* New York, for February, 1947.

Insular Inspiration

RICHARD E. JOHNSON

• *The Stricken Land, Unsolved Problem, and Dynamite on our Doorstep* are some of the more recent literary appellations given to our crowded Caribbean possession, Puerto Rico. It has become popular even for church groups to point out problematical aspects for missionary promotion by the use of similarly provocative titles. As a result we have become quite conditioned to expect that little good can come from Nazareth, and when the Island is mentioned we heave a pitying sigh and consign her to the lap of the gods without further ado. It would be an astounding revelation if someone could set down facts with well-documented study and careful thought to assure us that there is an immediate solution to the troubles of this beautiful country; but the people who know the true picture most intimately are oftentimes as hopeless as the newcomers.

New Note of Hope

But in spite of all the aforesaid conditioning, you would have heard a new note of hope creeping into the old story of despair had you sat recently in the chapel of the McLean Conference grounds about ten miles south of Bayamón. High on a steep hillside, the conference grounds overlook the La Plata River, which winds painfully around the hills. But you would have seen and heard more than the river and the tropical vegetation and the cooling breezes; you would have seen the first Rural Workers' Institute of the Association of Evangelical Churches of Puerto Rico at work, and you would have heard things to gladden any rural church worker's heart.

Among other things you would have found out that the Island is from seventy to eighty percent rural, and that the rest of the people are dominated by rural life even though they live in the larger towns and cities. You would have learned a new meaning for "rural," for here even the hilltoppers and the woodsmen (*"Jíbaros"** to you) are surrounded by neighbors at quite close range. Daniel Boone would never call any part of this land rural, nor would the average United States farmer. There is no isolation; there is no lonely area; people are everywhere in great numbers.

* Pronounced heé-bar-oh

The People on the Land

As many people as there are in Brooklyn live in this space as farmers, farmers without land. One hundred twenty thousand families have no place to live, and they are called *agregados*—squatters. The average rural income runs something like $300.00 per year. To illustrate the meaning of this new idea of "rural," the example of one of the churches nearest the Conference grounds will serve. Although the church is far beyond the end of the nearest road, and must be reached on horseback, the Sunday School attendance runs about 300 weekly. Thus, the problem of isolation is collective rather than individual, for a population density of more than 600 per square mile leaves little extra room for hermits in the mountain fastness.

This Institute

The Evangelical Churches are aware of their problems and are attacking them with vigor. This Institute for Rural Workers had its roots in the annual meeting of the Association of Evangelical Churches last year, at which time the rural institute was planned and a request was made to the Home Missions Council of North America to send a rural worker for full-time service amongst the country folk. Interest on behalf of the mission boards was expressed through the presence of Dr. Henry Randolph, secretary of rural work for the Presbyterian Board of National Missions, Dr. Mark Rich, of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and Dr. Mark A. Dawber, executive secretary of the Home Missions Council. Representatives from various rural reconstruction projects sponsored by church groups were: Melvin Lauver, director of the Mennonite *La Plata Valley* Project;

Rufus King, director of the Church of the Brethren *Castañer* Project; Stanley Harbison, director of the Presbyterian *El Guacio* Project; Orm Greene, of the Congregational *Zalduando* Project; and Paul Lauver, of the new Mennonite *Pulguillas* Project. All the denominational missionary leaders stationed on the Island were also present, making up a most representative and able group.

The Need

The urgency of just such an institute as this and the ensuing vital program to follow is evident when the needs of local rural pastors are taken into consideration. This was not a meeting at which only the executives and officers did the talking; much of the heartbreak and joy, the defeat and challenge of the pastor's job became evident by what the individual pastor had to say about his work.

One pastor, for example, reported that he was receiving a salary of ten dollars monthly from his church. His roof leaked so that it was difficult to keep anything dry in this land where it rains so much. Furthermore, the church did not own the house, and the owner was pressing him to get out at once. This pastor had to go out and work hard every day to support his family besides doing his church work.

Another had thirty-five dollars monthly on which to support eleven children and try to get them to school. He also had to supplement his income by farming in order to make ends meet at all. Neither of

these men was bitter, and neither was considering leaving his church work to find a better livelihood. Both were delegates to the Institute to find better ways and means to surmount their difficulties.

Reconstruction Beginning

The work of reconstruction is beginning, and the church is playing a significant part. One pastor who lives near a relocation project of the Land Authority, where one-quarter of an acre to three acres are being given to former *agregados,* already is serving one hundred of the hundred and fifty families settled near his church. Furthermore, the congregation is going to move the church over into the center of the relocation project to serve the people all the better.

Another pastor is responsible for the development of the first Lord's Acre project on the Island. Others are training their laymen to touch those sections and churches which are beyond their reach, since most of them do not have cars as does the circuit rider in the States. Sunday Schools in outlying sections are proving successful, and evangelistic efforts are the rule rather than the exception. Seminary students are kept grounded in the soil by frequent visits to rural churches and by experimental work in church projects during the summer vacation season. There is an awareness in the faculty and administration of the Evangelical Seminary which predicts good leadership in the days to come.

Officials Interested

The Insular Government and the U. S. Dep't. of Agriculture and Interior personnel who attended some of the sessions, and who conducted a tour of the Island's rural reconstruction work the previous week, are of the highest caliber. Furthermore, they are vitally interested in the problems and the hopes of the people and the churches. Their social consciousness, their alertness and interest are indeed an inspiration of the highest order.

The Home Missions Council's promise of a full-time rural man was fulfilled at this meeting, and the cooperation of the group was pledged to a new emphasis upon the rebuilding of rural life as a major duty of the Evangelical Churches. The government workers likewise have pledged information, instruction by trained workers, and a total program of cooperation to this new rural endeavour.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the Institute were: a recommendation for closer church cooperation with the government programs of rural reconstruction; the pursuit of a careful study of the rural needs of the Island and their relation to the church; recommended intensification of the existing rural curriculum in church-related schools and the seminary; recognition of the duty of the church to minister alike to economic and "spiritual" needs of the people; the directing of attention to a needed preaching program cognizant of Christian values in rural life; and encouraging church groups which had not already done so to establish "projects" similar to the ones mentioned above at La Plata, Castañer, Guacio, etc.

No one left the meetings feeling that many of the great problems had been solved, for they were practical people. But certainly those who took part in this first Rural Workers' Institute left knowing that the answer lay in the great human and Divine resources available to the church which were so apparent throughout the presentation of papers, the discussions, and the worship services during two days which may mark the beginning of the upsurge of Puerto Rican Christian rural life.

A Reader Writes

• "I have read with much interest the March issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. The material contained in this issue seems to me to be superb. It is my distinct impression that this type of material should be of real service to rural pastors.

—MARSHALL HARRIS

New Training Plan

• Auburn Theological Seminary and the Rural Church Institute, Ithaca, N. Y., have joined forces to launch a new venture this summer for training rural ministers. The plan is designed to supplement the training now being given by the seminaries and eleven eastern seminaries have decided to cooperate by furnishing students and forming an advisory council.

Approximately 20 students will spend the entire summer in central New York during which time they will do supervised field work in local churches, attend the six weeks' summer session at Cornell University and take a weekly seminar on "The Rural Church" provided by the Institute.

The Rev. Ralph Williamson, Director of the Institute, has been released from his regular duties to do the preliminary work and to take some studies at Teachers' College, Columbia University. Interviewing of students at the seminaries is already under way by Mr. Williamson. Selection of the churches to be used for the practice work is also under way. Pastors and missionaries will be admitted to the class if the quota is not filled by the seminary students. Mid-Western students may also be admitted.

Most of the churches being selected are within 35 miles of Ithaca. Splendid cooperation is being met thus far and it is anticipated the able pastors serving them will render an invaluable service in the training of future members of the rural clergy.

Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, President of Union and Auburn Theological Seminaries is chairman of the advisory council. Dr. Walter S. Davison is giving much attention to the plans. The cooperating seminaries are: Andover-Newton, Boston University School of Theology, Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Crozer, Drew, Hartford, Harvard, Princeton, Union, Yale.

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Meet the Preacher-Printer

TED H. TOWNSEND

• A. F. Knapp of Madison, in central New York, gets up early on Sunday. He has to, because by one p.m. he has to give four sermons at four different churches. Pine Woods, Bouckville, Madison in Madison county and Waterville in Oneida county, N. Y., are the four charges served. Four sermons, four choirs, four choir rehearsals, etc., etc.

Mr. Knapp keeps in touch with all the parishioners in his four parishes by publishing a bulletin each week and sending it to all members. In fact it goes to more than members —to every church attendant. Mr. Knapp is a rural pastor. He plants a garden; he talks farm crops with the farmer-members of his church; he goes to the woodlot when there is a "bee" to cut wood for the church furnace.

The Printing Job

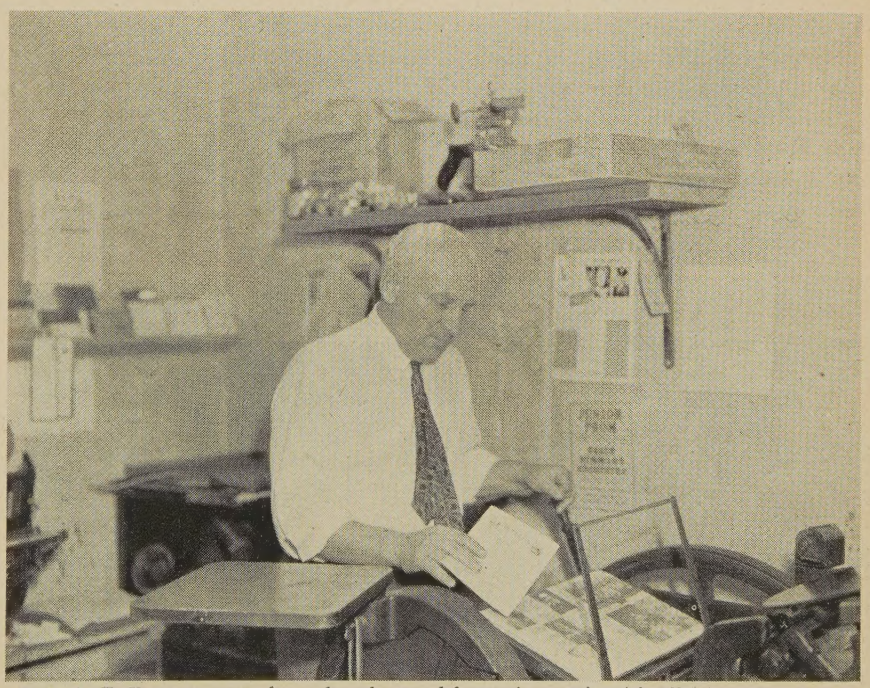
But the thing he likes best is to gather a bunch of copy and sit down at his linotype machine, and pound out type for his church bulletin. The machine is not a toy, but the real thing, just like you find in a modern newspaper office. And in the parsonage at Madison there is a printing press and cases of type. Mrs. Knapp is allowed the use of the remainder of the house except for the printing plant.

Rev. Knapp is able to set the type, make up his page forms, and print his bulletin. Then he addresses them and sends them to the Post Office where he has a mailing permit.

The Methodist Church Bulletin is now in its eighth year and No. 25 of Vol. VIII contains an extract from a sermon; notices of a Parent-Teacher meeting; reports on Sunday school activities; a list of hymns for next Sunday and a report on church attendance at the different services for the previous Sunday. Then there is a write-up about "No Religion in the Public Schools" and a letter from Belgium thanking donors for packages sent.

"I could not serve my charges satisfactorily without the Bulletin," Mr. Knapp says, "and I do like to print it myself."

Mr. Knapp won't say much about it, but he has received letters of commendation from his Bishop, the district Superintendent and many laymen on his job of printing his own message for the people he serves.



Rev. A. F. Knapp serves four churches and keeps in touch with all his parishioners with a bulletin he publishes himself.

Minister Accompanies Goats to Greece

• "DAIRY GOATS are badly needed in war-torn areas! Even if thousands of them were already on their way there would still be need for more." So wrote the Rev. Vincent W. Bucher, Dent Co., Mo., in *Dairy Goat Journal* for March 1946, in discussing goats for the world's needy and what to do about the situation.

Mr. Bucher has done something about it, following the plan outlined in his article and has gone to Greece with a cargo of more than 175 dairy goats, a shipment made possible by the generosity of many of those who read his article and of others who provided funds for such a shipment. The work was done under the Commission on Emergency World Services of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches, through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Mr. Bucher spent more than a year working with the several groups involved to get things ready for this gift.

The Shipment

The keeping of goats is a common practice throughout the European nations receiving the help of UNRRA. Many of these regions are not well adapted to other kinds of livestock, many of the farmers want goats above all other kinds of stock to provide food under rigorous mountain conditions of farming. During the war and occupation millions of goats were lost and their absence has accentuated the food shortage. These 175 dairy goats will help farmers in these regions build up their war depleted herds.

Before shipment the goats were assembled in three collection centers, and then sent by rail to Baltimore, Md., for their ocean voyage.

The first collection center was maintained by Mr. Bucher's own community church near Gladden, Mo., where 61 goats were made available. Besides the goats from his own group, contributions of choice stock came from Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bommer, Miss Louise Rose, E. W. Vogel, Mrs. Ruth Hopson, and others. Charles H. Tulloss loaned a buck for use in breeding the does before shipment, and to be retained for use by Mr. Bucher's Shannondale Community House.

From the Northwest

Charles M. Damon, a relief-minded Presbyterian layman of Rapid City, S. Dak., became interested in the project. He had no previous experience with goats but is an experienced stockman. Mr. Bucher says of him, "He is a rare man, with generous heart and an exceptionally alert mind." Mr. Damon secured 74 goats in his region, the largest donor being Charles Potter, who gave 57 goats and provided facilities for all the goats until ready for shipment to Baltimore.

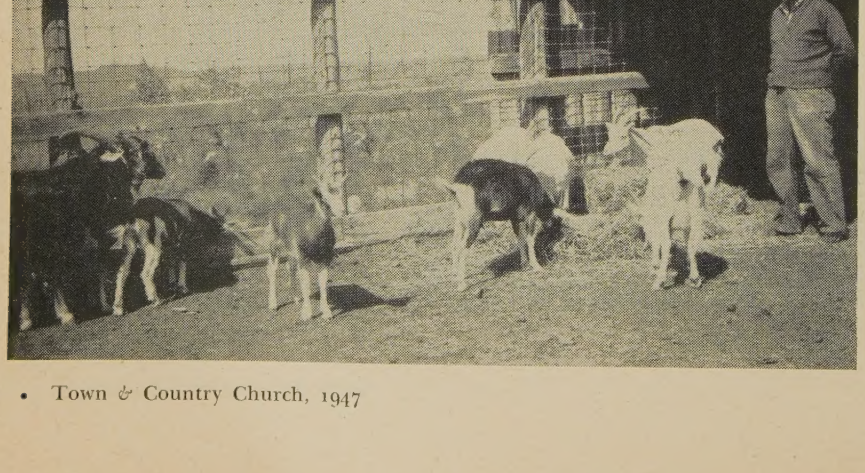
From the region of Bloomville, O., came another 41 goats.

Besides the goats donated by

breeders many were purchased with funds raised by the Evangelical and Reformed Churches over the nation. Young peoples' conferences and classes were especially generous.

More Going?

While this shipment in itself is large, it is but an infinitesimal per cent of the goats actually needed to accomplish the necessary relief job and put this portion of the goat-raising world back on a self-sustaining basis, and UNRRA and other agencies are making plans for further shipments, with specific requests for Saanen, Toggenburg, Alpine and Nubian stock, at least eight months of age of good breeding and in good health. It is not essential that the stock be registered purebreds if it is of general high quality. Any interested in assisting in further shipments should write V. W. Bucher, Shannondale Community House, Gladden, Mo.—*From the Dairy Goat Journal, by permission.*



Going To Summer School?

• The annual circular entitled "In-Service Training for the Minister in Town and Country" has been prepared by the Committee on Town and Country. It is available through your Board of Home Missions. Copies may also be secured from the Committee on Town and Country at 5c each.

Notes from a Village Church

JANIS LAUPMANIS

• My particular field of ministerial work, located at Lacota, Michigan, has been facing many difficulties connected with small village activities. When first appointed to the Lacota Methodist Church—the only church in a small community of about 200 people—the church membership was 25 with a Sunday attendance of from ten to twenty people. As soon as my acquaintance with the surrounding territory had been somewhat established, I discovered that we could—and should—draw people from a radius of about five to eight miles of surrounding territory.

A First Step

One of the first steps in organizing the church was to start a choir. Although there were only from five to ten young people and adults in the beginning we were willing to invest a few dollars for special music instead of using our hymnals for the choir. That aroused enough interest to enable us to present choirs of 16 adults and 15 children the following Easter. Last Christmas one choir had 32 adult members, and there were 35 children in the junior choir.

Now, after almost two years' work, our church attendance averages from 70 to 100 people on Sunday mornings, with a membership of 84. This is our plan: *want them—get them—keep them—teach them—win them.* Thanks, also, to a number of Lacota laymen who could see the meaning of an active church in their community, and their help in calling and organizing car groups driving to church, our church can now look forward to a most satisfactory second year. Our budget goal has almost been reached which included, as one item, an increase in the minister's salary from $400. to $1,500.—this having been achieved without calling or other special financial effort.

Training Bodies

The next and somewhat slower step for the church will be to train more leaders—but with a strong men's Sunday school class, 25 enrolled in the youth group and an active woman's group, there is little doubt that our church is beginning to stand on good ground.

One of the main difficulties with which our church is faced is transportation. The shortage of cars can still partly be blamed on the "aftermath" of war, but even during prewar days there were scores of families without a car. I believe that it would be one of the most profitable projects for each local church to make a serious effort to supply each of its rural pastors with either a station wagon or small bus. It is true, particularly with our young people, that miles are no hindrance in the chase of entertainment but, even when there is a car in the family, it is much harder to turn down the effort of someone who made a special trip to "pick you up" than it is for any person to decide "not to drive to church."

The Twelve

Many a person has so been introduced to regular church attendance that it has become a part of his Christian experience, and now some of those are the ones who are responsible for bringing others along with them. And how little there is new about this plan! Was it not our Master who went out *first* to seek the twelve to follow and go along with Him? And, later, was it not the twelve who went out and won others who soon called themselves Christians?

Country Church Obligations

• In *Capper's Farmer* for January 1947 David E. Lindstrom, University of Illinois, sums up country church obligations as follows:

1. To serve the spiritual needs of all country folks
2. To help save the soil and build up its fertility
3. To preserve our democratic way of life
4. To develop better rural schools
5. To foster the family-owned and operated farm
6. To work for a better system of farm tenancy
7. To advocate and support a rural health program
8. To strengthen and preserve all country churches

Before and After in Our Church School

FRANK GULINELLO

• What shall we do? This question is often asked by persons interested in improving the religious education program in our church schools. This "before and after" story is about a school that underwent a "plastic surgery." What happened in my church school can happen in any school, if there are the will, the "know how," and the necessary facilities. My school's transformation was made possible because of the response of persons in the congregation. And I could not go on with this story without first expressing my gratitude to my "assistant pastors."

What We Had

This small town church school in 1942 was typical of the Sunday schools throughout small churches. It met between ten and eleven in the morning. The whole school, except the beginners, assembled to worship for twenty minutes. Then came the class period for about a half hour. Its curriculum consisted of group graded lessons, respective group quarterlies, and Bible study. Its total enrollment was about ninety. For facilities and equipment it had ample room space but lacked a teachers' library, blackboards, materials for class projects, visual aids such as pictures and maps, and the most tragic lack was Bibles.

The only Bible in the church was the one on the pulpit. The school functioned with its own officers and treasury. As for planned programs and objectives, they were unknown. The church's educational program did not touch its adult membership. The school adjourned close to eleven when the church bell rang the call to worship. It wasn't too long before I heard laments and cries for improvement.

Plans For Improvement

My plans for improvement included the following: First, the use of more time. We Protestants have got to stop believing that we are doing a wonderful job in teaching during the thirty-nine hours a year allotted to the Sunday school. Compare this with the Jewish use of about 250 hours and the Catholic's employment of about 200 hours. Second, teaching with specific aims.

How many schools run haphazardly without any set program and aims? To all appearances they just "run" because the children are in the building and something has to be done with them. Teacher training was next on my list. Not everyone can teach. I know that too many churches have only those that want to help but are handicapped for lack of training. How a school suffers only God knows? But this teacher problem is universal and something that has to be dealt with throughout our Protestant system of education.

Closely Graded Lessons

I also planned to introduce the closely graded lessons and departmental organization and individual classes. The school and the teachers need to have the "tools" necessary for an expanding program. Did you ever see a carpenter build a house without his tools? Church school teachers need more than just a quarterly and the Bible. In small churches the want of "tools" is very sad indeed.

This expanding program called for a two-hour Sunday session. From ten to ten-fifty class preparation and study. From ten-fifty to eleven-thirty the children learned by doing; work projects pertaining to the lesson were undertaken. From eleven-thirty to twelve the children worshipped. Later on another hour was added to the program because of released time from public school.

Some Results

The results of this venture have been very beneficial. The children increased in number, in stature, and in wisdom. Comments from one parent after another were to the effect that their children were really learning something about religion. In several tests given to various groups our children have done better than others having the same subjects but not the expanded sessions for learning. As for numbers we did not particularly go all-out for increasing enrollment and attendance.

Before one undertakes to increase his enrollment he ought to consider the following: What is a church lacking room space going to do with increasing numbers? What is the church, lacking teachers, going to do when the numbers of pupils are increased? What about the educational program? Is it one that will not only win new ones but keep them coming? What service will a church render to children who come and go never to return again?

In the past five years our church school has gained about sixty-five new pupils. They came once and have kept coming because of what the school offered to them. The increase in numbers is largely because new families were won to the church and the children who became the school's best "propagandists."

Our total enrollment is 230. Pupils from four to seventeen number 150, in comparison with eighty-five in 1942.

Occasionally the children's program has been altered in order to avoid duplication with the weekday school. Lack of teachers has also necessitated some changes. But all in all the school has functioned in a routine pattern.

Overcoming Obstacles

Now a word about obstacles and how they were sufficiently overcome to assure the gradual development of the "new." The "new" will always meet with opposition, but persistence, patience, and education cannot be defeated.

The sour notes included the following expressions: Why not let good enough alone? The idea of having two hours for Sunday school! The whole thing will cost too much. I wonder if this young minister knows what he's doing. Who is going to direct and superintend the school, the minister or its officers? Should the ladies' parlor be used by the chil-

dren? Let's watch for the chance to say "I told you so." Why should the school's financial needs be included in the church budget? The minister, it was said, was spending too much time with those who did not pay church bills.

In closing I want to say that in small churches the minister has to be also an educator. He is the only professional person that the church can afford to pay. And if he does not lead in the educational program of the whole church, small town church schools will continue to "run on crutches." The seminaries must train men to preach and to teach. The latter function has been tragically neglected.

Michigan's Working Conferences

• During the month of February four one-day rural church conferences attracted approximately 300 church leaders in the state of Michigan. These conferences were sponsored by the Michigan Council of Churches in cooperation with four colleges. Interestingly enough, the conferences were of uniform size with approximately seventy-five registrations at each place. It was heartening to see that nearly fifty per cent of all registrants were lay people. They gathered early in the morning and stayed until four o'clock in the afternoon.

These were real conferences. People were not called together primarily to hear speeches, for at most places there was one address which usually was assigned about thirty minutes before it was to be delivered —the topic being selected by the Conference. The conferences worked in small groups, under competent leadership, and discussed the main issues confronting the church in their communities. In two of the conferences there had been prepared in advance a list of items which were known to be the concern of some people. The conferences selected the ones they thought were the important ones, or raised new ones. These were then discussed, and the opinions of competent resource persons were sought.

In two conferences the delegates were divided into discussion groups which dealt with the main phases of the problems of rural life. Each group asked themselves the question, *"How can the church function in this area?"*

These conferences were important for the simple reason that they were building a consensus of opinion concerning what was significant in rural life and what was essential to the welfare of the church.

—Don F. Pielstick

Rural Coordinator Installed

• On February 18, Richard E. Johnson was installed as coordinator for rural work, the Association of Evangelical Churches of Puerto Rico. This took place at the closing hour of the Rural Workers' Institute. Dr. Mark A. Dawber installed Mr. Johnson, charging him to commit himself to a task the magnitude of which is hard to realize.

Johnson is a graduate of Carroll College, Waukesha, Wis. and Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N. J., where he pursued major studies with Dr. Ralph A. Felton in the Department of Rural Church. He is a Methodist, a member of the Northwest Iowa Conference, where he served in rural work.

This work as rural coordinator is the position that was filled by the Home Missions Council in response to the request of the Annual Assembly of the Association of Evangelical Churches last year.

Rural Life Sunday, 1947

• Protestant churches throughout the country are observing Rural Life Sunday this year on May 11, or on another convenient Sunday. The theme for the 1947 observance, which is sponsored annually by the Committee on Town and Country, is "Stewardship in Rural Living."

A special folder, issued by the sponsoring bodies, contains suggestions for the observance of Rural Life Sunday in both city and rural churches. Exchange of pulpits between country and city pastors and the participation of local agricultural organizations in worship services are two of the suggestions.

An order of service for use in churches on Rural Life Sunday, prepared by the Rev. Robert L. Clingan of the Federated Church (Presbyterian and Baptist), Genoa, N. Y. is included in the folder, available through your board of home missions, or at 5 cents a copy from the Committee on Town and Country.

First observed in 1929, Rural Life Sunday programs now are held in many of the 70,000 Protestant town and country churches in America.

The purpose of the day is to "set apart a definite period to emphasize the meaning of Christianity for rural life; for the invocation of God's blessing upon the seed, the fruits of the soil, and the cultivators of the earth; and for the consideration of justice for agriculture and the spiritual values of rural life."

Rural Laboratory Training School

• A Rural Laboratory Training School is being held in May 1947 at the Rich Valley Christian Church in Indiana. The Training School is being sponsored cooperatively by the Committee on Town and Country and the Indiana Council of Churches, under the direction of the International Council of Religious Education. The director is Ruth Elizabeth Murphy of the staff of the International Council. Forty pupils are to be selected from four cooperating local churches. The number of student teachers is being limited to thirty.

Stanley Skinner with Rural Church Institute

• The Rural Church Institute has granted Ralph Williamson a leave as Director of Field Work and has taken steps which resulted in the Rev. Stanley Skinner of Williamstown accepting appointment to the vacancy so that the program of field work might continue unhampered.

Mr. Skinner will make his home near Ithaca. He began his services March 1st. He is available to churches and communities throughout the state. Surveys, counselling with pastors and church officers, etc., will be assigned to him.

The Rural Church in India

• Discussing the economic problems of India, the Rev. F. A. Peter of Toronto, a missionary of the Church of England in Canada, told the Home Missions Council that while India readily acknowledges the debt it owes Christian missions for pioneer work in education and medicine, nevertheless, the church must now play a leading role in economics as well.

"To bring about this change," he said, "we need in missions the active aid of scientists, agriculturists, engineers, chemists and businessmen. The shift of emphasis in what missions are now called upon to do means enlisting the services of technicians along with those of doctors, teachers and preachers. It also means giving them the scope and wherewithal to work, and thus a rethinking of our policies and allocation of funds.

The Economic Situation

"One cannot view the position of the rural Indian Church without reference to the general economic position of the country at large, as the root causes of the prevailing distress are the same. India is a predominantly agricultural country, where 87 per cent of the population live in villages and small towns. The increase of population during the last century has been phenomenal, and is gathering momentum all the time. In 1911 the total population was 311 million and at the last census in 1941 it had increased to nearly 400 million. An increase of 89 million in 30 years! The present excess birth rate over deaths is 6 million per year, and it is estimated that the next census in 1951 will show an increase of close on 60 million.

"If the outlook for the country at large is grim, the picture and position for members of the Christian Community is even worse. In the Punjab we have about 300,000 Christians among a population of about 40,000,000 non-Christians. The great majority of the Christians are landless laborers, small artisans and menials in the villages. For their livelihood they depend very largely on their non-Christian landlords. By legislation these classes in the villages are debarred from acquiring land, as they are classed as non-agriculturists—a measure itself designed to protect hereditary farmers against losing their land to moneylenders—but this protection does not extend to the strata to which most of the Christians belong.

"Without land and with usually only temporary employment most of them eke out a precarious livelihood. Politically, too, the Christian community constitutes a small minority among unsympathetic majorities of Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs. A fortunate few have obtained Government service, been able to buy land or otherwise secure their independence, but the majority are and will remain landless laborers."

CWS Ships Over 4,000,000 Pounds

• Thirteen countries in Asia and Europe received shares of 1,769,000 pounds of relief goods contributed by Americans and shipped abroad by Church World Service in February, Robertson M. Fort, has announced.

Though below the record January shipments, Mr. Fort said, the total for the two months was well over four million pounds. This kept the interdenominational relief and reconstruction agency abreast its effort to reach a goal of shipping 23,000,000 pounds overseas in 1947.

One shipment which augurs promise for the future was two and one-half tons of vegetable and grain seed to Poland, Mr. Fort pointed out. The seed was expected to arrive in time for the spring planting.

Garments, food, bedding and shoes comprised the bulk of the cargoes. There were also quantities of vitamin tablets and medicines going to Asia. Nearly 9,000 yards of cotton goods were sent to Burma, where a desperate shortage of lightweight clothing exists.

All but 60 tons of the month's total of supplies were gifts in kind from denominational, interdenominational and non-church affiliated groups and individuals.

Home Influences Abroad

• America's "unfair and un-Christian treatment" of non-white minority groups is a major deterrent to the spread of Christianity throughout the world, Dr. Ralph E. Diffendorfer, executive secretary of the board of missions and church extension of the Methodist Church, declared in an address before the annual meeting of the Home Missions Council of North America. The Council represents 23 Protestant denominations.

"Treat the Mexican fairly and Christianity will be proclaimed in Latin America," he said. "Clear our American Indian record and East Indians will take notice of democracy and Christianity. Abolish lynching, not by law, but by effectively acknowledging the Negro's right to respect and decent citizenship and not only Africa but all the non-white world will rise up and call the church blessed."

"The expenditure of an estimated $650,000,000 on new church buildings in the United States will not cause a ripple of comment in the non-Christian world of Asia, Africa, the islands of the sea and elsewhere, nor will the adding of thousands of new members to the rosters of the traditionally programmed churches of our country.

"Nor will new church buildings, settlement houses, educational institutions or hospitals among the minority groups—Negroes, Mexicans or other Latins, Chinese, Philipinos, or American Indians be commented on by the billion non-white people of Asia, as a favorable witness for Jesus Christ. These signs of possible progress may have evidences of Christian vitality in the days before world wide communication, international travel and global war—but not now."

Looking Ahead to the Harvest

• The Committee on Town and Country will have ready by August 15th the annual Order of Service for use in a Harvest Festival. Single copies will be 5c; quantities may be ordered through your Board of Home Missions or the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10.

United Evangelism

• The Committee on Evangelism of Sunday school District No. 9 of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has taken a forward stride. The Rev. John L. Weaver, Church of God, at Smithville and Bainbridge, who was elected less than a year ago as Superintendent of Evangelism of the District, regarded the office too important to merely follow the traditional custom of preparing an annual report. In October 1946 he called a meeting of the officers and pastors of the district at which time he proposed the holding of union evangelistic services in several churches. After some discussion, his proposal was accepted. He chose as associates on the committee: Rev. Frank Dilkes, pastor of Boehm's Methodist Church, to serve as treasurer, and the writer, pastor of the Highville Evangelical United Brethren Church, as secretary. The above named Committee worked out the details for the program of Evangelism. The series of meetings was held in January, 1947.

The services were well attended in the three churches, all of which are located in the open country. The attendance ranged from 70 as low to 286 as high, with an average of 148 for each night of the revival. There was an average of more than 5 ministers present each evening. A roll call the last evening revealed that there were present: 6 ministers, 9 Sunday school superintendents, and 45 Sunday school teachers. Special music, either vocal or instrumental, sometimes both, was provided each evening by the different cooperating churches. Throughout the services there was manifested a wonderful spirit of unity and Christian fellowship among both ministers and laity. Many expressed regret the last evening that the series of services had so soon come to a close.

At the close of the successful union evangelistic campaign, the committee on evangelism was asked to institute a service that would continue the fellowship among the members of the churches and Sunday schools of the district. The committee decided to sponsor a "Hymn Sing" in which all the churches and Sunday schools in the district are invited to participate. The "Hymn Sing" will be held the last Saturday evening of the month in different churches in the district.

C. R. Swartz

Spread of Weekday Religious Education

• Rapid growth of the weekday religious education movement during the past four years was pointed out by Dr. Edwin L. Shaver, Chicago, director of weekday religious education of the International Council of Religious Education, at the annual meeting of the Council.

Enrollment in this period has increased from three-quarters of a million pupils to two million, and from 750 to 2,200 communities carrying weekday religious education programs, he stated.

"However," Dr. Shaver warned, "while these figures are very encouraging, our first concern must not be in mere popular acceptance. The quality of the movement is of far more importance than its expansion, and it is to this that we must give our major effort and thought, giving strict adherence to a policy of wise direction and careful guidance."

During 1946 Dr. Shaver visited 42 communities in 19 states, and reports that new systems are springing up with great rapidity, while many older systems report increased enrollment.

"The Real Crisis of Our Time"

• Only world-wide spiritual revival will settle the ideological controversies plaguing mankind today, Dr. Hermann N. Morse, executive secretary of the board of national missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and retiring president of the Home Missions Council of North America, declared at the Council's annual meeting.

Pleading for unity within the church as the only sure means to attain a spiritual rebirth among the nations, Dr. Morse pointed out that society has been forced by "the very logic of events to a large-scale collectivism as an antidote to the extreme individualism that was characteristic of the frontier.

"We might have made that process spiritual at its core," he said, "if we had insight to do it and if our churches had been united enough to do it.

"But the religious separatism that in some instances served the people very well did not serve us well in this."

Describing the "real crisis of our time" as spiritual, Dr. Morse added: "The Christian church must be a much greater force in the future than it has been, or it will become much less important and increasingly socially impotent."

O everlasting God, who art the eternal fountain and only giver of life: We bless Thee that we may again behold on every side awakened nature; and as Thou dost cheer our spirits with the fresh grass and new green trees and plants, grant us thankful hearts to praise Thee for the promise of Thy renewed provision for our body and life, and an abiding trust in Thy unchanging love now and eternally. . . .

We beseech Thee, O Lord, have mercy upon all those who labor in the cultivation of the earth, and grant that by the power of Thy grace both their own souls and their labors may be fruitful. . . .

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who dost feed the birds and clothe the flowers, and who carest for us as a father doth for his children: We beseech Thee, graciously guard us against distrust and vain overcarefulness, and help us, through Thy Holy Spirit, to live to the hallowing of Thy name, the coming of Thy Kingdom, and the doing of Thy Will; so that we may cast all our care on Thee and in unwavering faith abide trustingly in Thee; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. *Amen.*

Order of Service for Rogationtide
The United Lutheran Church in America.

Institute on the Navajo

• More than 100 denominational leaders, mission executives, government officials, and laymen interested in problems of the American Indian, have held a two-day Institute on the Navajo at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The Institute was sponsored by the Home Missions Council of North America, the Indian Rights Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association on Indian Affairs, and the Commission on Indian Affairs of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Resolutions adopted by the conferees urged mission boards to cooperate in supporting a vigorous literacy program among the Navajo together with the publication of appropriate literature; recommended that Congress provide increased appropriations for educational facilities and more adequate relief for needy persons on Navajo reservations; and requested the United States Public Health Service to make a thorough-going study of the physical, mental, social, and economic effects of peyote, the dried flower of a cactus plant found on the Mexican border which is believed to have narcotic effects when eaten.

The Institute also urged Congress to accelerate work on irrigation projects proposed by the Office of Indian Affairs; recommended action which would enable the Indian Service to effect a more liberal policy of loans to Indian veterans; and went on record in favor of equal treatment, privileges and responsibilities of "all peoples, whether Indian or non-Indian, in all fields of legal, economic, social and political concern."

Have You Changed Your Address?

• Please notify the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., promptly about any change in your address. The prompt notice will assure you of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH without any omissions. It will also save us considerable time and money.

The Lord's Land

• Morris E. Fonda writes a booklet, under the title given above, which is printed and distributed by The Sears-Roebuck Foundation, Chicago, Illinois. The author acknowledges "the splendid assistance received from members of the clergy throughout the United States."

The Foreword reads: "There can be no separation of man from the land—his whole existence is tied to the soil—from the beginning of his days to the time his body is laid to rest in the arms of the earth. From the busiest corner in the modern city to the windblown country fields, human livelihood is a product of the land.

"This book is dedicated to the principle that conservation of souls and the conservation of soil are inseparable—what is good for the land is good for man. Helping in the all-important task of applying conservation in the souls of people and on the acres of America's land, are the clergymen of the nation. It is the earnest hope of all participating in the production of this publication that it will be helpful in making the intelligent use of soil and water an integral part of every clergyman's program. For the clergymen of America this booklet is prepared—to them it is gratefully dedicated."

Write to the Foundation for your copy.

Bread Shared

• "Wheat is something more than carnal fodder. To nourish man is not the same as to fatten cattle. . . . Bread has more than one meaning. We have learned to see in bread a means of communion between men, for men break bread together. We have learned to see in bread the symbol of the dignity of labor, for bread is earned in the sweat of the brow. We have learned to see in bread the essential vessel of compassion for it is bread that is distributed to the miserable. There is no savor like that of bread shared between men. . . ."—*Flight to Arras,* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

Origins of Embertide

• The fast of the "Four Seasons," or Embertide, was originally a time of supplication for a blessing on agriculture, and the relic of a pagan observance which was transformed by the Roman Church into a Christian celebration. It was only in the fifth century that the custom arose of conferring the sacrament of ordination at this time. The Masses appointed for Ember Days in the Roman Missal contain no reference to the conferring of holy orders at this time, but frequently recall the primitive purpose of the institution of these fast days, namely the commendation to God of the "kindly fruits of the earth."—Church Literature Association, London.

Minnesota Institute

• Rural and urban ministers from all parts of Minnesota are assembling at University Farm this spring for the Rural Church Institute. This is the first such short course to be given since the Rural Pastors School more than 30 years ago, according to J. O. Christianson, Director of Agricultural Short Courses. Every denomination is expected to be represented at the Institute which is being held May 5-9 on the University of Minnesota Farm Campus, St. Paul. W. C. Coffey, President Emeritus and chairman of the general committee on arrangements, says that the Institute, built around the theme "The Stewardship of the Rural Community—Serving the Needs of Rural People," is the result of the growing need felt by church organizations for a better understanding of the rural community.

Magazine Articles

Evangelism and the Rural Church, by E. O. Ellefson, Rural Lutheran, Flandreau, So. Dak., February 1947.

Country Pastor—And Saint, by Ernest Roughman, Land and Home, 3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa, March 1947.

Rural Social Action, by Roger Ortmayer, Social Questions Bulletin, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y., March 1947.

The Place of the Small Community In Our National Life, by Ralph Templin, Mountain Life and Work, Berea, Kentucky, Spring 1947.

Our Rural Churches—An Analysis, by Bruce C. Maples, Word and Way, 1023 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, Mo., February 20 and March 6, 1947.

Rural Observer on Old Fences and Watering Troughs

• Frederick B. Hodges of Rome, New York, has recently contributed observations entitled "Poetry Along Old Fences" and "Rural Fountains of Youth" in the *New York Herald-Tribune,* After finding varied moods and inspiration in farm boundaries, this is his conclusion about old fences:

"A venerable fence is always a creature of moods strangely like your own. I think often of one I knew in youth that seemed fairly in sympathy with that inner life I alone knew. It was an odd structure, made of stumps, stray boards, bushes and stone piles, dirt thrown up in ridges, and any small trees that came in the way—a makeshift barrier grown into the land. It ran back from the road into a thinly wooded hollow where a small brook lived. Here and there a wheel track led the way to a deserted house and fallen barns. Either the tumbling fence or the lively brook was forever trying to talk with me.

"I thought of the nights when those living in the old house stirred in their sleep, half hearing the songs of the stream—of the mornings they walked to breathe the cool, sweet air of the hollow and were refreshed to meet the day. It was all there in the dreams of the faded old fence, all there, going to rest with it.

"There's the rambling old fence that bends away at the end of the valley like a wraith of beautiful years; there's the quaint little affair walking with you in the poplar woods amongst bracken and sweet fern, and the simple line of birch sticks and branches that picks its way between pitch pines in the sand—they all speak the same language and find the same place in your heart."

"Unifying the Community"

• The Ohio Christian Rural Life Conference was held on the above theme in Columbus, Ohio, March 17 and 18, 1947.

Churches and U. N.

• The Christian church has played a significant role in influencing the United Nations to adopt as one of its major purposes the securing of fundamental freedoms for all people without regard to race, religion, sex, or language, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, dean of the Graduate School at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa., and associate director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, declared recently in an address before the 53rd annual meeting of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.

"The church," he said, "claims no privilege for itself which it does not wish freely granted to all men. It believes that human rights and freedoms must be respected if there is to be a world society of order, justice, and progress. From the standpoint of the Christian message, it contends that all men have the right to hear the Gospel and to determine for themselves what their response shall be."

Modern Pilgrims Coming

• Church World Service, which represents Protestant churches, reports that Protestant displaced persons are now arriving at our shores. Like the original Pilgrims these people are in search of a new life of hope in America. The church agencies assist these modern pilgrims in making their adjustments. A local congregation interested in assisting should write to the American Christian Committee for Refugees, 37 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

Cardinal Gibbons Institute

• Rev. Horace B. McKenna, S.J. sends information about activities in connection with the Cardinal Gibbons Institute in Ridge, St. Mary's County, Md. One of the important institutions in the community is the Martin de Torres Credit Union. At a recent meeting fifty-five persons were present. It was reported that over $11,000 had been loaned to members without default in the past seven years of operation.

Christian "Shock Treatment"

• A Christian "shock treatment" to make American parents feel a real sense of responsibility for the problems of the home was urged by Dr. Earl F. Zeigler of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, before the Adult Work Section of the International Council of Religious Education.

Dr. Zeigler asked that adult workers and pastors give straight facts to parents in "sick families that they may recognize their condition, find out how they got that way, and what they must do to get well and keep well."

"The urgency of the situation is felt," Dr. Zeigler said, "if it is remembered that today's juvenile delinquents will become tomorrow's parents, devoid of a sensitivity to our society."

At Newcomerstown

• In the Tuscarawas hills, at Newcomerstown, Ohio, they gathered at five different places to eat beef that Cy Young had raised on his farm. The reason for the five dinners was that there was no place big enough to seat the hundreds who came to pay tribute to Cy on his eightieth birthday.

They came from afar to celebrate his 511 victories in 22 years in the major leagues—with three no hitters. (Ye Managing Editor saw Cy Young win his 500th game, which accounts for some of the interest in the recent celebration.)

Connie Mack, who is only eighty-four, sent a telegram and a check. When Connie signs checks he has to write his real name, Cornelius McGillicuddy. After the greats and the near-greats had sung his praises, Cy Young could only sit and dry his eyes when they called on him for a few words.

Then they topped it off by offering Cy a contract to pitch for the Cleveland Indians, and told him to choose a day when he might bring all the inhabitants of Newcomerstown to Cleveland to see a game this summer, as guests of the Indians.

Migrants in a Nut-Shell

• The migrant problem must be considered in its three phases. First, there is the area from which migrants originate. How to create the conditions for adequate living at the point of origin is one issue in the migrant problem. It is mainly a problem of a proper farm program for America which will make it possible for people to live where they are at present.

Secondly, what shall we do for migrants on the road? Several hundred thousand people are continuously on wheels. Often without adequate funds, hounded by police and lonely, they are stranded between a home to which they cannot return and a new economy which they have not yet reached. Camps for their temporary existence and guidance to new locations are necessary components of a program for moving people.

Thirdly, the task becomes one of rehabilitation of the migrant in his new location. Local churches in the communities where migrants are concentrated must reach out to lonely souls, but the task is so large the denominational mission programs must help, also. All Christian people may help in the solution of our migrant problems if they will assist in creating a bond of smypathy between the settled and the shifting elements in the population.

—Thomas Alfred Tripp

A Word About Larger Parishes

• I have found it hard to find those who will accept the pastorate of a larger parish. It is just too much hard work. This is not especially a criticism of pastors, it is a challenge to meet the situation. Up until now, larger parishes have been proving what they could do in the line of an adequate program. They have left finances pretty well alone because of lack of time. Now it seems we must spend a bit of time pushing up the salary schedule of pastors of larger parishes so they can meet their car expenses. One doing a good job will have $500 car expense in a year's time and a fair wage so that he will see daylight in taking a larger parish in which to work.

I am still sold on larger parishes but they have just cut their eye teeth on community programs and still have the problem of leadership and finances to solve. I believe each larger parish should have a council of six in each church. One from the board of deacons, one from the trustees, one from the ladies' aid, one from the Sunday School, one from the young people, and one at large. The council should meet monthly with the pastor to plan the individual church program and help him carry out the program, and then the local group should meet with a similar group of other churches as the larger parish council once a quarter to plan the larger parish activities and help the pastor carry them out.

—K. A. Roadarmel, New York Baptist Convention

Selected Rural Fiction

Compiled by

CAROLINE SHERMAN, U.S.D.A.

• For ten years a short annotated list of recent rural fiction has been issued annually. It includes only the more significant rural novels. It was begun at a time when the changes in the economic and social phases of differing areas and eras of our rural regions were furnishing some of the most fruitful and dramatic themes in American writing. Searching stories were disclosing in thoughtful and warmly human terms the impacts and longer effects of the rise and decline of rural industries, of shifts in agriculture, of migrations of farm families, of periods of prosperity and depression.

The saga of the development of the Middle West, that had so long predominated among these books, was giving way to fictional studies in many other places and times within the history of our country. Even the lingering consequences of this westward movement was at last being traced among those who stayed behind and had the thankless and heart-breaking job of shoring up the eastern community and economy to withstand the shocks of further change. . . .

The few selections for this year are as follows:

Acres of Antaeus. By Paul Corey. 388 pp. New York: Henry Holt & Company. $2.75.

Relentless corporation farming based on foreclosures versus family farming under insuperable odds of depression is dramatized by the lives of a young couple who are on opposing sides. The lives of their families and friends elaborate the theme.

Independent People: An Epic. By Halldór Iaxness. Translated from Icelandic by J. A. Thompson. 470 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.00.

The struggle of man with the elemental forces of nature here operating among primitive conditions gives this epic a touch of the universal that is well sustained by the way it is written in stirring narrative, poetic description, and rich awareness of the sinews of life.

The Fields. By Conrad Richter. 288 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Sequel to "The Trees" published in 1940, this book can stand alone if necessary. The corner of dense forests of Ohio then half-cleared for use has here a few people, a few half crops, a little hamlet. The feel of the characters, and the speech of the period are reflected with artistic economy and integrity. In miniature, it is half epic and half idyl—and wholly admirable.

No Better Land. By Laban C. Smith. 311 pp. New York: Macmillan Company. $2.75.

Character delineation signalizes this simple chronicle of growing farm prosperity in the early 1900's in Wisconsin. Mother of eight children, the housewife drives them all and the hired hands in relentless remembrance of poverty while the blind husband is a noble figure not soon forgotten.

Delta Wedding. By Eudora Welty. 247 pp. New York: Harcourt Brace. $2.75.

Atmospheric story by a distinguished young writer who selects a few days on a great Delta plantation to suggest the habits and attitudes of mind that still flourish there.

The Drama of Soil Conservation

• In the 1920's, Hugh H. Bennett, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, began to advocate demonstrations in soil conservation. He went about among his colleagues saying that a large portion of the original area of tillable land in the U. S. had been ruined for practical cultivation, chiefly by erosion. He added that some of the remaining tillable land was already badly damaged by erosion and much of the rest was subject to erosion.

Out of those early experiments developed broad programs of soil conservation which are among the more important aspects of the whole national farm policy. One of the first things the federal officials asked for was a system whereby farmers themselves might legally establish their own soil conservation districts. This meant that the cooperating states had to pass enabling laws permitting the incorporation of such districts. The method was somewhat like that whereby the citizens of an area have established local school districts.

Numerous Local Districts

By early 1946, 47 states had passed enabling laws and, in these, 1,440 local districts had been legally established. These districts cover all or parts of some 1,850 out of the 3,000 rural counties in the U. S. They include over 794 million acres. They embrace 3,616,000 out of a total of about 6,000,000 farms in the nation.

In these local districts, of which farm people are the officers, the farmers cooperate to protect their own lands. Teamwork is the watchword. Often they work together in small groups, helping one another to apply good land-use and conservation methods to their lands. The work of each farmer on his own farm fits into a district-wide plan.

The state colleges of agriculture and the staff of the Soil Conservation Service, U. S. D. A., furnish technical, educational and other aid to the local districts.

Cooperative Agreements

By 1946, these soil conservation districts had made cooperative agreements with over 310,000 farmers, covering a total of 867,000,000 acres.

In each case, the farmer agreed to use conservation farming on all his land. The district organization agrees to furnish technical aid and, in certain cases, machinery, seeds, other help.

A conservation plan, based upon the needs and capacities of the land, has been made for every one of these farms. The Soil Conservation Service did the technical planning and helped to apply plans to the land.

Work has been completed on nearly 30,000,000 acres of this land. In all, about 76,000,000 acres have been "treated" to some extent.

In 1945, work was underway on 13,012,000 acres, compared with 7,943,000 acres in 1942.

How They Go About It

The first thing the farmer and the technical soil conservationist do is to look over the farm together. They walk over each field and study each parcel, and check this information against a new kind of document known as a "land-capability map." This specially prepared map tells how the soils of the whole district should be used. They check this information against what the farmer says about the way the field has been used.

Out of these talks comes a farm plan, outlining the classes of land available and the uses to which each class should be put.

The land to be used for growing cash crops is selected. Then the land needed for growing feed for livestock is determined. Crop rotations are recommended for these fields. If there is additional land suited for limited cultivation, it will generally be marked for permanent meadow or hay. Land for pasture or woodlots will usually come from other classes not suited for cultivation.

Thorough and Varied Plans

Thus the plans provide for the use of each field in accordance with its capability. In many cases, it may take several years to do all the conservation needed. A farm plan may call for complete terracing and contour cultivation on 50 acres. But the farmer may be able by working hard to complete terraces on only 10 acres a year. In the meantime, however, he can use contour cultivation on other fields.

Many different measures are used. They include: terracing, strip cropping, contour cultivation, tree planting, building ponds, seeding pastures, stubblemulch farming, water disposal and drainage, special windbreak plantings.

Often land is taken out of cultivation. In the Broad River District of Georgia, in the Piedmont, 473,502 acres were cultivated when the planning began. When the planning was completed, it was recommended that 104,169 acres be taken out of cultivation, and that 369,333 acres be farmed more adequately than previously.

Under All, The Land

"The soil—which all of us, city and country people alike, live from—is our Nation's most important resource. Industry and labor, and professional people, as well as farmers, have a large stake in the country's land." (From the foreword to the publication, "Our American Land, The Story of Its Abuse and Its Conservation," by Hugh H. Bennett, Chief, Soil Conservation Service. Write to Information and Education Division, S. C. S., U. S. D. A., Washington 25, D. C.)

School for Ministers' Wives

• Mrs. Edwards Dickinson, Rio Grande, O., sends information about the school for ministers' wives held at Grailville, Loveland, Ohio. The general theme this year was "The Family and the Community." Among aspects discussed were: "Experiences in Community Building," "The World Crisis in our Own Home Towns," "Education in the Home," "Renewing Society at its Roots," "Practical Plans for Action."

Announcement Regarding the 1947 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country

THE PLACE AND TIME: Rochester, New York, November 4-6, 1947.

PROGRAM: A printed program will be available on application to your Board of Home Missions or the Committee on Town and Country about June 15, 1947.

REGISTRATION FEE: A registration fee of $1.00 will be charged. This fee is used to print the proceedings of the Convocation, copy of which is then furnished to those who registered. This is paid when you register at Rochester.

ROOMS: A list of hotels will be printed on the program announcement. Approximately 500 rooms will be available in homes in Rochester. For these there will be a charge of $1.00 per person per night, and $1.50 if breakfast is furnished.

RESERVATION OF ROOMS IN HOMES: If you wish to reserve a room in a home send a postal card to the Committee on Town and Country, giving your time of arrival and departure. *Send this card as early as possible.*

HOTEL RESERVATIONS: Those attending must make their own reservations by writing directly to the hotels, which will be listed in the printed program.

WHO MAY ATTEND: Everyone interested in the town and country church may attend.

CORRESPONDENCE: Address inquiries to Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.

"How Rural Are We?"

• *The Seminary Review,* Naperville, Illinois, for February, 1947, is a rural church issue. Among the articles published are:

How Rural Are We?
Elmer D. Riebel
The Call of the Country Church
Clarence W. Dehne
Rural Emphasis at Red Bird
John W. Bischoff
Rural Church and China
Harold D. Hoffman

American Country Life Association

• The 1947 Conference of the American Country Life Association will be held June 16-19, 1947, at the University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa, according to an outline of an announcement from Joseph Ackerman, President, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

Summer Projects

• The Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, announces four work projects and camps for the summer of 1947. One of these will be in Tyrrell County, North Carolina. In all there will be openings for about thirty-five persons. For further information, address the Fellowship.

Farmers' Museum

• The New York State Historical Association maintains a farmers' museum at Cooperstown, New York. Among its publications are *Johnny Appleseed,* 25¢; *Backgrounds of an American,* 30¢; and *Beginnings of an Early New York Village,* 25¢.

Next Issue

• The next issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will be dated September, 1947.

A Scriptural Heritage for Rural Life

• In *The Pastor,* Nashville, Tennessee, for March, 1947, is found a thorough article on the above title by five members of the Alabama Conference chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (unofficial):

"The Holy Bible itself provides guidance for the Church in formulating a philosophy of rural life. The history of the Jewish kingdoms reveals foundations for just such a program as our era demands."

The Enlarged Town & Country Church

• We have doubled the size of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Committee on Town and Country decided to take this step as a venture of faith. Receipts from subscriptions have thus far been sufficient to provide an eight-page but not a sixteen-page journal. The hope is that there will be many interested cooperators who will say so many good words about TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH that we will have enough subscribers, even at the present subscription rate, to carry the venture.

What You Can Do

There is no central promotion fund for TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It can only be promoted by the interested boards and agencies and by the ministers themselves. Will you, therefore, take responsibility for:

1. Asking for circulars and sample copies;
2. Announcing the Journal at ministerial association meetings;
3. Seeing that TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is announced at all rural church conferences;
4. Sending us material for publication.